GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:644
ANSWERED ON:11.05.2005
UNETHICAL PRACTICES OF ASSISTED PRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY CLINICS
Veerendra Kumar Shri M.P.

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the unethical practices of privately run Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) clinics spread all over the country with combined annual estimated turnover of several thousand crores;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether infertility clinics/hospitals are functioning without being subjected to any restriction, regulation or prescribed standard;

(d) whether these clinics are indulging in unethical practices of procuring, storing, selling and indiscriminately using donor ova/sperm/embryo; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken/proposed to be taken to streamline the procedure in these clinics?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 644 FOR 11TH MAY, 2005

(a) & (b) The Government is aware of the unethical practices adopted by few ART Clinics through scientific meetings and conferences.

- Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) requires enormous technical expertise and infrastructure.
- Has a success rate below 30% under the best of circumstances. It is expensive and taxes the couple`s endurance physically, emotionally and monetarily.
- Many of ART Clinics in the country do not have adequate trained manpower and infrastructure facilities to deliver these highly sophisticated technologies.
- In some cases the infertile couples are being cheated by providing relatively simple procedure and charged for complicated and expensive procedure.
- Some techniques, which are not being universally accepted are also being used here like Round Spermatid Nuclear Injection and Pre-implementation genetic diagnosis in gender selection of the embryo.

(c) The existing rules and regulations for clinics/hospitals are also applicable to infertility clinics/hospitals. However, no standards/regulations have been prescribed for conducting ART procedures yet.

(d) Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) involves use of donor ova/sperm/embryo for treatment of infertile couples. There is chance of some clinics indulging in unethical practices of indiscriminate use of donor ova/sperm/embryo.

(e) - Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has prepared Guidelines for Accreditation, Supervision and Regulation of ART Clinics in India after detailed discussions and debate by expert groups of the ICMR and the National Academy of Medical Sciences and then by practitioners of ART and the general public.

- Guidelines have been examined by the Ministry and are proposed to be sent to the State Governments for Accreditation, Supervision and Regulation of ART Clinics.